

# Greywater System Maintenance Fact Sheet

## Q. How do I maintain my greywater system?

Most grey water systems require a certain level of ongoing maintenance. Once a greywater system is installed it becomes the householder's responsibility to ensure it is maintained in good working order. Any defect must be rectified as soon as it becomes apparent. Should the system cause a nuisance that is dangerous to health or it is offensive, the owner's may expose themselves to legal liabilities. Some greywater systems require regular maintenance.

Homeowners may be required to carry out ongoing maintenance of the system once it is installed. This maintenance may include the following:

- Regular maintenance of systems with filtering devices.
- Systems with two reuse areas require regular diversion.
- Sedimentation tanks will require de-sludging approximately every 5 years.
- Test the soils for pH and salinity on a regular basis. The addition of gypsum may be needed to help eliminate any build-up of sodium and magnesium. Also, occasionally test for nutrient levels to make sure there is no overuse of fertiliser.
- Tanks should be regularly inspected for the presence of mosquito breeding, which if found should be eliminated and the point of entry; sealed or screened.
- Insect screens on vents and inspection ports should be regularly inspected and cleaned or replaced if blocked or damaged.
- Ensure excess watering does not occur. Over watering can lead to water logging and plant death.
- Homeowners should manually divert the greywater stream back into the sewer or existing septic system in times of rainfall e.g. winter/spring. This is essential to avoid over-watering of soils during the wet season (e.g. winter/spring rain period) and addition of nutrients in excess of plant uptake requirements.

## Precautions to take when conducting maintenance of greywater systems:

- Avoid direct contact with the skin through the use of rubber gloves and protective clothing;
- Ensure that cuts, sores, open wounds etc are adequately protected (by a waterproof covering) from any contact with greywater;
- Ensure that exposed body areas that come into contact with greywater are effectively washed;
- Do not make contact with the mouth or face either directly (e.g. fingers, hands) or indirectly (e.g. smoking) until after washing hands; and
- Do not eat food until hands have been thoroughly washed.

This information has been taken from *the Code of Practice for the Reuse of Greywater in Western Australia*. Copies of the code are readily available on the internet.

## Please return completed form to:

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